



National Transportation Safety Board

## The Chairman's Corner

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Friday, July 29, 2005



### **NTSB Testifies Before Congress on Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Issues**

Last week, Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker testified before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Railroads, emphasizing his extreme concern that accidents and fatalities still occur at unacceptable levels at the nation's grade crossings.

Before the Subcommittee, Rosenker discussed the National Transportation Safety Board's findings and recommendations on train whistle audibility and passive grade crossing safety. He stated that the Board has long been interested in the adequacy of a train's audible warning system to alert motorists to the train's presence at grade crossings. In examining this issue in a variety of accidents, the Acting Chairman stated that the Board found, while train horns can be effective, they could also fail to communicate the intended warning. He also stated that the Board's recommendation for in-vehicle warning systems can help enhance safety at passive grade crossings and are a potential solution to the audibility problem that drivers encounter.

### **Member Healing Retires from NTSB**



Last week, Member Richard F. Healing announced his decision to retire from the Board following over 26 years of public service in the Federal government. Regarding his decision, he said that he looks forward to being able to spend more time with his family. During his time at the Board, Member Healing was a strong advocate for a wide range of issues, and many industries viewed him as deeply committed and instrumental to their safety efforts.

Before joining the Board in 2003, Member Healing spent a year as Director of Transportation Safety and Security for the Battelle Memorial Institute. Prior to that, he served for 17 years as Director, Safety and Survivability, for the Department of the Navy. In 2001, Mr. Healing was presented the Navy's highest civilian award — the Distinguished Civilian Service Medal. He also was recognized with the SAFE International "General Spruance Award" for safety education achievement, and an Aviation Week "Laurel" for bringing new awareness to the importance of wire health and condition monitoring technology in aviation.

"I want to thank Member Healing, not only for his service to the NTSB these last two years, but for his long record of service to our country," NTSB Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker said. "He brought a valuable perspective to our deliberations with his special interest in issues like human factors, vehicle recorders, and helicopter operations. I know I speak for all Members of the Board when I say that he will be missed."

### **NTSB Cites Canadian National's Failure to Maintain and Inspect Track as Cause of Accident**

In a report adopted Tuesday, July 26, the National Transportation Safety Board found that the Canadian National Railway Company's failure to properly maintain and inspect its track resulted in a rail shift that derailed an Amtrak train near Flora, Mississippi, last year.

On April 6, 2004, Amtrak train No. 58, City of New Orleans, was traveling northbound at approximately 78 mph when it passed over a shift in the rail and the entire train — consisting of a locomotive, a baggage car, and eight passenger cars — derailed. One person was killed as a result of the derailment. The Board's report identified safety concerns with Canadian National's continuous welded rail maintenance and inspection procedures, Amtrak's emergency response training of its employees, and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) oversight of both.





## Jetstream 41 Procedural Trainer Donated to Academy



Aviation investigator, Todd Gunther, took the initiative to start the process that brought the trainer to the Academy

During the week of August 1-5, the Academy will premier the use of its recently acquired BAE Jetstream 41 (J-41) procedural trainer in AS-60's **Survival Factors in Aviation Accidents** course.

The trainer, which has been named ACD-1, is a fully equipped mock-up of the J-41 and was built by British Aerospace Engineering (BAE) and used as a marketing tool prior to the model going into line production.

The ACD-1 interior replicates a FAR Part 25-certificated turboprop regional aircraft, including an Electronic Flight Instrumentation System (EFIS) or "glass cockpit," passenger service units, seats and restraints, interior and emergency lighting, and regulation placards. And yes, it even includes a lavatory.

Todd Gunther, a regional investigator (MARA), spotted the trainer fuselage outside and on its side at the Leesburg Airport in Virginia. After a series of conversations, Leesburg Airport Authority offered to donate it to the NTSB Academy for use in our training programs.

After the trainer was received at the Academy in February of this year, Gunther took on its revitalization as a personal project. He cleaned the cabin and reinstalled equipment to restore the trainer to its present condition. AS-60 and Academy staff pitched in to ready ACD-1 for use in the Survival Factors course.

In addition to the documentation exercise in the Survival Factors course, ACD-1 will be used in the photodocumentation courses and will allow the Academy to enhance training programs with new modules, such as simulations of emergency procedures and documentation exercises.

Special thanks to Todd Gunther, and all those in AS-60 and the Academy, who worked on this valuable addition to the Safety Board's training resources.



Academy staff give the trainer a final cleaning, inside and out, in preparation for its first use in an Academy course



ACD-1 in the Academy's main lab, ready for use in the Survival Factors course

## NTSB Begins Cross Training with FBI Evidence Response Team

To advance the Safety Board's exceptionally productive working relationship with the FBI, the Academy hosted the first of a series of cross training sessions with NTSB investigators and FBI Evidence Response Team (ERT) specialists.

ERT specialists, who respond to all major aviation accidents, employ tools and resources like wreckage distribution maps that have been valuable to Board investigators. In the first training session, held July 18-21, the FBI offered detailed explanations and demonstrations of their on-scene operations, processes, and techniques.

In the next training session, Safety Board investigators from all modes will teach the FBI's ERT specialists how the NTSB conducts the on-scene portion of an investigation. By enhancing the mutual understanding of each agency's goals and procedures at the accident site, both teams will be better positioned to offer support and assistance to the other at key points in an investigation.



FBI agents give NTSB investigators hands-on demonstrations of a variety of evidence collection and documentation techniques

## Update on Most Wanted Safety Recommendations

State legislatures with year-round legislative sessions are on summer recess. On July 15th, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed a bill adding a cell phone use restriction to the existing graduated license law.

Acting Chairman Rosenker, accompanied by Tom Doyle and Bill Gossard, visited the Silverton Marine Corporation facility at Millville, New Jersey, on July 26, 2005. The visit focused on the process of designing and building a large recreational boat and particularly on safety features, such as electrical, safer fuel tank systems, and power plants. On July 28th, the Cape Cod Times interviewed Acting Chairman Rosenker, assisted by Bill Gossard (SR-30), on the Board's mandatory boater education and other boating safety recommendations as they relate to legislation currently being considered in Massachusetts.

SafeKids Worldwide briefed the Advocacy staff on July 27th on their development of an international safety organization for children. We are developing a plan for joint efforts in 2006 at the Federal and State level.

A record 47 States and Territories (of 56) have responded to the Board's June request to verify or update information on open recommendations and more are expected shortly. The revised system for working with the States has tripled the number of recommendation responses compared to the previous system. These responses are used for the State Most Wanted Board Meeting and for non-Most Wanted recommendation closure efforts.